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AUTHOR Ahlborn, Ernest S.
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ABSTRACT

Designed to provide volunteer, religious education teachers with several tools to increase attendance at early morning religious classes and counteract student absenteeism, the study developed a computerized roll and record keeping system, taught new teaching skills and methods, instructed the teachers to make personal contact with absentees within 24 hours, and introduced a reward and recognition program for students as well as encouraged make up work. The sample consisted of 34 teachers and 611 students in early morning religious classes held by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. At the conclusion of the practicum, the results indicated that attendance increased 3% compared to the same period the previous year. Both teachers and students expressed that rewards did not encourage attendance. Personal contact and make up work did the most to increase attendance. Teachers felt more secure and successful with the increased ability to use new teaching skills. Extensive appendices highlight eight areas of supplemental information: (1) Church Education System (CES) news release; (2) CES mission statement; (3) curriculum sample; (4) certificate of achievement; (5) make up guidelines; (6) sample class roll; (7) sample monthly report; and (8) student questionnaire. (Author/CK)

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Increasing Attendance at Early Morning Religious Education Classes by Increased Personal Attention, Recognition and Teacher Improvement

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Ernest S. Ahlborn

Cluster 46

A Practicum I Report Presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1993

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

Verifier:

Dr. H. Keith Buhler

H. Keith Buhler

Dr. H. Keith Buhler

CES Area Director

Title

1929 University Drive

Address

Boise ID 83706

City State Zip

September 20, 1993

This practicum report was submitted by Ernest S. Ahlborn under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

October 21, 1993

Date of Final Approval of Report

Mary Ellen Sapp

Mary Ellen Sapp, Ph.D., Adviser

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ABSTRACT

Increasing Students' Attendance at Early Morning Religious Education Classes by Increased Personal Attention, Recognition and Teacher Improvement. Ahlborn, Ernest S., 1993; Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D Program in Child and Youth Studies. Attendance/Attendance Patterns/ Attendance Records/Truancy/Secondary Education/High Risk Students/Discipline/Volunteers/Average Daily Attendance/ Dropout Prevention/Religious Education.

This practicum was designed to provide volunteer, religious education teachers with several tools to assist them in increasing attendance at early morning religion classes held by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The writer developed a computerized roll and record keeping system; taught new teaching skills and methods; instructed the teachers to make personal contact with absentees within 24 hours; introduced a reward and recognition program for students and encouraged make up work by the students.

At the conclusion of the practicum the writer found that attendance had increased by 3% when compared to the same period the previous year. Both teachers and students felt that rewards did not encourage attendance. Personal contact and make up work did the most to increase the attendance. Teachers felt more secure and successful with the increased ability to use new teaching skills.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The area for which the writer has responsibility consists of 18 small, rural towns covering about 8200 square miles. The area is agricultural interspersed with agricultural-based industry. Most of the farms are small and are family owned and operated. The area is in the sixth year of a drought that has caused a depression and lack of employment.

The factors explained above have caused many of the farms to cease hiring outside help and depend instead on the family to provide the necessary labor. Many high school students find it necessary to help out with harvest in the fall and with planting in the spring. Therefore their attendance at school is sometimes affected.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The writer is employed by the education department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). The education department is called the Church Educational System (CES).

The educational program of the LDS Church began

with the organization of the church in April of 1830. Such basic philosophies as "the glory of God is intelligence," (Doctrine and Covenants, 1981, p. 182) and "it is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance" (Doctrine and Covenants, 1981, p. 266) were part of the early dedication to learning that was established by church leaders. Another statement further clarifies that position towards education: "And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come" (Doctrine and Covenants, 1981, p. 265).

The growth of the LDS church's attitude toward education can be seen in the efforts of the early members to provide education in a frontier environment. The church members had scarcely arrived in their new homes in the west before they turned their attention to educating their children (Berrett, 1988). These early schools covered all subjects, including religion. As the territorial government and later the state government began to fill the gaps in education with public, tax supported schools, the role of the church changed to providing only religious education.

The first seminary for high school students was begun in 1912 in a building erected by the church close to a high school. The students were released from school for one period each day to come to the seminary for a course in either Old Testament, New Testament or Church History. That

first small group of 70 students has grown to include over 460,000 students. Today, CES spans 99 countries and teaches in 19 languages (see Appendix A). Although CES does have some elementary and secondary schools, they exist only in international areas of the world where public education systems are not available. The system utilizes over 4,700 full- and part-time faculty members and over 18,000 individuals who give voluntary Church service time as teachers in the seminary and institute of religion programs.

The religious education program covers eight years, four years in grades 9-12 and four years in college. The writer is responsible for the high school age program in the area that that has already been described. There are three different delivery systems of religious education for high school students. The first is released time seminary. This program is available when local laws allow released time. There must also be a minimum of 100 students to attend the classes. When both requirements are met, the Church will purchase land adjacent to the high school, build a building and place a full-time, professional teacher there. Some released time programs have over 1,500 students and 15-20 teachers.

The second delivery system is early morning seminary. Early morning seminary results when local laws do not allow released time or when the LDS population is too sparse to meet the 100 student minimum. A class is held before school

begins, sometimes as early as 6:00 a.m., and meets in the LDS chapel that is closest to the high school. Part-time, nonprofessional teachers are used to teach early morning classes.

The third delivery system is home study seminary. This program exists in areas of very sparse LDS population where there are not enough students to meet the minimum of 10 required for an early morning class. The students work on a home study lesson manual during the week and then meet with a volunteer teacher for a review and a lesson. This weekly class is usually held on a Sunday when the students come in for church services.

About 27% of the population in the area supervised by the writer are members of the LDS Church but nearly 33% of the high school students are LDS. During the 1991-92 school year the early morning seminaries enrolled between 68% and 82% of their potential students. The totals for the area the writer supervises were 571 enrolled out of a potential of 815 or 71%.

Although the writer has responsibility for all three seminary delivery systems, this practicum will be limited to the early morning delivery system for religious education. The released time and home study systems do not have the same problem with absences that are evident in the early morning classes. There are approximately 611 students enrolled during the current year in the early morning

classes supervised by the writer. They are all members of the LDS Church and have enrolled in an early morning religion class in addition to their regular high school schedule.

At the present time there are 34 teachers, each teaching one class daily. The teachers have many different backgrounds and occupations. About two-thirds of them are women. It is the responsibility of the writer to interview, to hire, to train, to observe in the classroom and to provide inservice training for the teachers. These teachers are paid a small expense allowance to cover basic expenses incurred as a result of their teaching but they receive no salary, wage or other renumeration.

The writer also serves as a coordinator to bring together church leaders, parents, students and teachers so that the program of religious education is successful in accomplishing the mission of the LDS Church and CES (see Appendix B).

Seminary classes throughout the world participate in the same course of study each year. The LDS Church accepts four volumes of scripture. Each volume of scripture is the subject of a year-long course of study. These are entitled Old Testament, New Testament, Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants. While in grades 9-12, an LDS student will have the opportunity to study each volume of scripture if the student registers for seminary all four years.

The teacher and student have many items available to help make each course of study interesting, complete and uniform world-wide. Each teacher has a teacher outline, a copy of the student manual, a set of video tapes that make up a media kit, and an institute manual. The institute manual is a college-level syllabus that serves as a reference manual for the teacher.

The curriculum is written by teachers who have been successful in teaching religion to high school students. The teacher outline includes the scripture block to be taught each day and includes ideas on how to teach that block (see Appendix C). Hints on how to develop student readiness, bring about involvement of students and assist students to learn to apply the lessons in their lives are part of each section. The curriculum is updated about every 8 years so that it will remain fresh and relevent to teenagers.

Each seminary student has available a student manual which contains supplementary material on each lesson. They also receive a laminated bookmark that can be used as a ruler. The bookmark is imprinted with a time line, history of the volume of scripture for the year's study and with 25 scripture references the student should know. They also receive a set of playing card size scripture references. These cards take each of the 25 scripture mastery references and expand on them by helping the student understand the

historical setting, the doctrine and the application of each scripture.

The seminary students attend class for a variety of reasons but most of them come simply because they want to be there. About 40% of the LDS young men who reach 19 years of age will spend two years serving as a missionary somewhere in the world. Their four years in seminary will be the most concentrated learning opportunity to help in preparation for this mission. Some attend because of parental pressure, "you don't get the car if you don't go to seminary." Others attend seminary because the LDS Church-owned universities and colleges give admittance preference to seminary graduates. For them that is a substantial incentive. It is estimated that over 70,000 LDS high school seniors in the United States and Canada will be competing for about 10,000 spaces for incoming freshmen in September of 1993.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The Church Educational System requires that a student attend 80% of the classes held to receive credit for a course of study. Graduation requires successful completion of all four courses. In the LDS Church, seminary graduation is considered to be almost as important as high school graduation. However a large number of LDS seminary students do not attend sufficient classes to receive credit. This difference between principle and practice often causes conflict between two or more of the parties involved - parents, students, CES teachers and CES administrators.

Problem Documentation

Attendance records indicated that 382 of 571 students (67%) received credit for the 1991-92 school year. In early morning classes the teachers gave credit to any student who attended at least the minimum number required. Tests, reading, assignments and class participation may affect the letter grade but an early morning student was denied credit only on the basis of attendance. Therefore the 189 students who did not get credit, were denied credit solely

on the basis of absences.

Attendance was supposed to be recorded daily and the class roll sent to the writer's office at the end of the month. The attendance figures for each student were then entered into the computer records, and a report was printed and mailed to the Bishop (local church leader) of each ward (a church unit of 400-500 members). The teacher should be contacting the parents of a student who has missed 3 days so the report to the local Bishop is a follow-up on the stewardship of CES to maintain lines of contact with both the parents and church leaders.

The rolls received by the writer at the end of each month were the documentation for the problem. Since the figures depended upon accurate record keeping by each teacher, the writer believed the problem was really understated. Experience has shown that virtually every teacher missed recording some absences.

For the implementation phase of this practicum, the writer chose the months of November, December and January of the 1991-92 school year to use for comparison. The rolls for those months showed that 382 of the 571 students (67%) attended the minimum number of classes required to receive credit. This figure was lower than the year end figure of 73% who received credit. It was the opinion of the writer that this was because of students doing make-up work when possible.

The number of make-up assignments completed were not recorded. Instead the total number of absences was lowered on the basis of one absence per one make-up assignment. A make-up assignment meant the student had completed one lesson in the student manual and had it checked by the teacher. The exact number of students that took advantage of make-up work was not known, but if the writer's deduction was correct, at least 35 students used that option.

Early morning seminaries held about 160 classes per year. Therefore a student must attend a minimum of 128 classes to get credit. It was common to see student record cards with exactly 128 days of attendance recorded for a year.

Causative Analysis

The writer believed that the causes for excessive absences fit into three categories. One category was the lack of teacher preparation and teaching skills. Early morning seminary teachers are volunteers who are paid only a small expense reimbursement designed to assist them with the costs involved in teaching their class. Nearly all of them had occupations that took up the majority of their day. They also were very active in church and community activities.

The preparation process was been found to take from one to three hours per day in order to be properly prepared for

a class. Add the class time and travel time, and a teacher was using from three to five hours a day for this essentially volunteer activity. When a shortage of time occured, it was the preparation time that often was sacrificed.

Only rarely was one of the teachers a professionally trained educator. A high percentage of them did not have any teaching skills to help them in preparation and presentation of interesting, motivating lessons.

A second category of causes covers the activities of students. Many students worked after school or had chores on the family farm. Sometimes these jobs kept them at work until nearly midnight. Some students had to arise at 4 in the morning so the chores could be completed before seminary begain. It was not difficult to understand the challenge these students faced to be regular attenders.

Other types of activity that made seminary attendance difficult were the school extra-curricular activities. In the rural area covered, the distance to another school required long travel times. Because of the small size of the high schools many students participated in more than one extra-curricular activity at the same time. More athletic events were being held on week nights rather than just on weekends. All of these problems resulted in students being up very late on school nights, again making early morning seminary attendance more difficult.

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A third category is the size of the class. It was often difficult to find enough qualified volunteers to teach, and the writer had to place one teacher in classroom of 35 to 50 students. Personal contact, supervision, discipline and teaching all suffered in such a class. Consequently the students found it easy to slip into poor attendance habits.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Many professionals in education are concerned about attendance. Birman & Natriello (1978) found that high school absenteeism is clearly on the rise. Foster (1983) reported that the nonattendance of large numbers of students continue to be reported in all parts of the nation. A study on student absences by deJung & Duckworth (1986) concluded that student absenteeism continues to be one of the most serious and intractable problems for the secondary school.

DeLeonbus (1983) stated that absence has now been growing at a rate that is alarming, while a few years earlier Sewell & Sherman (1979) used the phrase "epidemic proportions" to describe the absenteeism in secondary schools. A more recent study (Thomas, 1985) concluded that one of the most significant issues confronting school administrators is attendance.

Fleming & Zafirau (1982) found that over three-fourths of school failure rates were explained by the attendance

rate while (French, 1991) found that attendance problems were often cited by teachers as the main obstacle to providing effective instruction. French (1991) also reported that attendance was the number one concern of high school administrators in the operation of their school. Rood (1989) called student absenteeism an interruption of the learning process that approaches 2,500,000 absences daily in public schools across the United States.

While it was easy to conclude that the problem was one of great significance in high schools nationwide, the writer was unable to find any references that applied to the subject of this practicum - private, religious education classes. DiGiacomo (1989) did refer to the need for religion teachers to be motivating and interesting to maintain the involvement of their students.

Several other older studies (Brim, Forgerty, & Sadler, 1978; Levanto, 1975; Phillips, 1978) also expressed the great concern of school administrators over the increasing number of absences and the amount of administrative time it was taking to deal with them. Birman & Natriello (1978) noted that some areas had no more than 84% attendance. They asserted that this can cause problems at three levels - the student, the school and for society.

Nationwide the average percentage of high school students reported absent is about 10%, approximately three times the number estimated as attributable to illness or

injury (deJung & Duckworth, 1986). Generally, class absences were found to increase slightly as the school year progressed but the loss of students because of dropping out probably minimized this increase since most drop-outs had higher absence rates. Rogers (1980) also found that students missed school more often at the end of the school year than they did at the beginning. Armstead (1980) felt that the time of the year has a relationship to attendance - absences get higher as the year progresses.

Nielsen & Gerber (1979) found that 75% of the habitually absent students had a problem with one or more of their teachers which the student thought could not be resolved. The same study also concluded that there is no difference in the rate of absence for male or female students although the males usually start a truancy habit in an earlier grade. Cintavey (1989) found that those students who were better readers had a better attendance average.

Absences cause some problems and challenges that can be very difficult for administrators and teachers. A study by the New York State Education Dept. (1985) reported that students find it difficult to learn when they are excessively absent. Teachers must continuously reteach the subject matter at the expense of boring the regular attenders. They also found that those who are excessively absent tend to cause more discipline problems.

Attendance habits formed by students during their high

school years will carry over into their lives and business careers (Sharp, 1984). Several problems caused by absences are listed by deJung & Duckworth (1986). They said that considerable managerial time and thus money is spent on absences. In addition, teachers can become burdened with makeup work and have less time for instructional activities. The authors feel that frequent absences disrupt the continuity of the instructional process.

Monk & Ibrahim (1984) cite statistics to show that students with good attendance may be adversely affected by peers who are not in class. They also conclude that when absent peers return to class, the teacher devotes additional time giving remediation to them thus the learning process is slowed down for those who had been present. A study by the Mt. Diablo Unified School District (1990) substantiates that point and adds that only in the classroom may the student hear the teacher's presentation. A student must also be present to participate in class discussion and enjoy the benefits of interaction between students and teacher.

Despite the great concern over high absence figures reported in the many studies that have been cited, several writers, including deJung & Duckworth (1986), feel that absences are "underreported." This is because of student deviousness, careless teacher reporting practices and at times, teacher's and administrator's concern for "appearances."

Several causes for high absenteeism are reported in the literature. French (1991) feels that absence is often a student response to a school climate that is not meeting the student's needs. deJung & Duckworth (1986) give a similar cause when they say that absences can be a response to inadequate or inappropriate curricula. They also report a listing of reasons most often given by students. The number one reason students give for being absent is "class is boring." "Dislike of teacher" was second.

The same authors listed the top two reasons given for not cutting a class. The first was the "class was interesting" and the second was that there was a "good teacher." The positive and negative reactions listed here give a good basis for designing an intervention process that will increase the attendance in the writer's implementation process. Gottfredson (1985) concluded that teenage employment decreased school attendance.

On a somewhat related topic, adolescence, Schickendanz, Hansen, & Forsyth (1990) stated that teenagers tend to prefer peers who resemble themselves and who have similar backgrounds and values. This would seem to be a plus for religious education classes. A long-time educator of adolescents wrote that teaching religion to high school students was important because without it, students cannot be fully-educated persons (DiGiacomo, 1989). Fortosis and Garland (1990) state that it becomes the task of the

Christian educator to teach the Bible in such a way as to make its disequilibrational potential a reality in the lives of adolescent students. They felt that a firm understanding of Piaget's theories and stages were critical for those who work with adolescents in a Christian education setting. They state that those working with adolescents should always be aware that while Christian teaching is disequilibrational, it is also their responsibility to lead students onward toward equilibration.

Ozorak (1989) felt that virtually all research has identified parents as the most important source of religious influence, even into adulthood. This adds a great challenge to the religious educator. Hauser (1981) found that youth who are able to find answers from the church, fare better than their counterparts who are not able to obtain the answers they seek. He felt that those youth who have identified with religions have been shown to be benefited from it.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The following goals and outcomes were projected for this practicum. The goal of the writer was to increase the number of students who received credit for seminary. Since attendance was the primary criteria for receiving credit in early morning seminary, the writer expected to increase the number of students attending 80% or more of the classes.

Expected Outcomes

Attendance records indicated that 382 of 571 students (67%) attended the minimum number of classes required to receive credit. The expected outcome of this practicum was an increase of 11% in the number of students receiving credit during the implementation period. The writer felt that this was a very reasonable expectation where the ideal standard of performance would be 100%.

The assessment instrument to measure this change was the class rolls of each teacher. These rolls were prepared in computerized form by the writer and a copy was given to the teachers for each month of the implementation period (see Appendix C).

Measurement of Outcomes

The measurement of outcomes was accomplished by analyzing the class rolls of each teacher. At the end of each month of the implementation period the teachers submitted their completed class roll to the writer. Written standards and uniform symbols for recording attendance were given to the teachers at the beginning of the implementation period.

Mechanism for Recording Unexpected Events

The writer kept a log of events that occurred during the implementation period. This included results of discussions in faculty meetings, the reaction of the teachers to various inservice lessons, conversations with teachers and observations made by the writer when classes were visited.

Description of Plans for Analyzing Results

The writer totaled the attendance for each teacher each month as a tool to strengthen inservice training for the teachers during the implementation period. The final summary was the total number of students that attended at least 80% of the classes during the implementation period. This total was then compared to the total for the comparison period to see if the outcomes were accomplished.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

The problem faced by the writer was that the Church Educational System required that a student have an 80% attendance record as the minimum requirement to receive credit for a seminary class. Even though the literature contained numerous examples of the problem of attendance in general, the writers who so easily recorded the extent of the problem were often puzzled about the solutions.

Brim, Forgety, & Sadler (1978) reported that there have been relatively few research projects dealing with causes and solutions for absenteeism. Although over one-half of the members of the American Association of School Administrators surveyed cited student absences as a very serious problem, only one in five said they had found an effective solution (Neill, 1979).

In the Mt. Diablo Unified School District (1990) the in researchers felt that their current efforts to improve high school attendance were not doing well. They also reported that their average attendance rate has remained the same after four years of efforts to reduce student absences. The finding of French (1991) was that it is a real challenge for

educators to find ways to encourage students to attend regularly. And finally the report of Duckworth (1988) concluded that it is not obvious what will motivate a high school student who is turned off.

In spite of the smaller number of solutions proposed in the literature when compared to the problems presented, there were a number of programs that seemed to have excellent potential for assisting school administrators and teachers with their attendance goals. The Mt. Diablo Unified School District (1990) expressed doubt whether rigid policies could have a major impact on attendance unless accompanied by a parallel interest in improving the vitality of the classroom.

Several authors (Eastwold, 1989; Northwest Regional Educational Lab., 1985) substantiated the idea that an improvement in the classroom could help. More "hands on" activities and flexible but challenging curriculum seemed to encourage higher attendance. They also urged teachers to break each class period into segments to vary the lecture-only format. They found that those who followed these or similar guidelines experienced about three percent increase in attendance.

Another large group of writers (Armstead, 1980; Burkett & Helm, 1989; Copeland, Brown, Axelrod & Hall, 1972; Fiodaliso, Largeness, Filipczak & Friedman, 1977; Miller, 1986; Phillips, 1978; Sheats & Dunkleberger, 1979; Wickert,

1987) all recommend contacting absentees or their parents personally. They found that school-initiated contacts to parents of chronically absent students offered schools a means of achieving a significant reduction in absenteeism. Wickert (1987) reported a 3.2% attendance improvement as evidence of success.

Miller (1986) also felt that maintaining accurate records was an essential part of the solution process. Steinberg and Elmen (1986) found that as adolescents progressed into secondary school, their success increasingly depended on their ability to manage their own time and behavior. They proposed that students attend school more often when their parents use democratic rather than authoritarian, decision-making practices. Students also attended school more often when their parents were warm and not overly controlling psychologically.

Several authors suggested that a reward system would be effective in increasing attendance. Duckworth (1988) said that he had found some evidence that positive incentives motivated students to regular attendance. He suggested a variety of small rewards. Wickert (1987) described a program where students were encouraged to set goals to have good attendance. Rewards and recognitions played a very important role in Wickert's outline. Providing trips, special activities, lunches, certificates, giving public recognition and other forms of tangible rewards were found

successful by several other writers (Armstead, 1980; French, 1991; Phillips, 1978). As with some other solutions, reward and recognition seemed to increase attendance when first implemented but later the attendance decreased.

Several writers felt that a punitive attendance policy was the best solution. Carruthers (1980) reported that Ellison High School had the best attendance record in Kileen, Texas, because of it's policy which involved withholding credit. Robert Byrne (1981), a former principal in New Jersey, discussed an attendance policy which brought their average daily attendance up to 95%. Students were allowed six absences per semester. The penalty for exceeding the limit was expulsion from class. However Kovas (1986) found that although a punitive policy would increase attendance for the first semester after it was begun, soon after that it would reverse itself and often get worse than before the policy.

Good communication with parents and students was found to be important. Wickert (1987) felt that any successful program to increase attendance must include a coordinated effort of communication between faculty, administrators, parents and students. Eastwold (1989) said that there must be parental involvement, consistent policies and clear, well-publicized expectations. deJung & Duckworth (1986) stressed that the relationship between absence and non-graduation needs to be better advertised.

French (1991) listed four steps that needed to be taken in order to increase attendance of students. He felt the first step would be to conduct staff development seminars. These seminars would cover areas such as teacher expectations, learning styles, the teacher's role in supporting students and attendance policies. The second step would be to establish attendance policies that are preventive instead of punitive. As a third step he felt that it was important to regularly and publicly recognize students who had good attendance records or who had made gains in their attendance. Finally, he felt that it was important to promote increased responsibility in the classroom though methods such as peer teaching and student learning teams.

Konet (1980) discussed a high school in New Jersey where a Student Attendance Review Committee met daily with students who had unauthorized absences. He claimed that attendance rose to well above 90%. He also felt that more responsibility must be placed on the student. The New York State Education Department (1985) wanted the teacher to assist the family and pupil in identifying and removing causes which were contributing to poor attendance.

The writer was impressed with the statement of deJung & Duckworth (1986) "In the final analysis, to attend or not attend a class is a student's personal decision. The student needs to believe that attendance is his or her best,

most rewarding alternative" (p. 52).

Description and Justification for Solution Selected

There are two major groups into which most of the solutions fit, punitive and nonpunitive. The punitive solutions would include expulsion from class or school, lowering the student's grade artificially, requiring make up work for each absence, contact with the student's parents, requiring the student to attend a Saturday class, or withholding credit.

The nonpunitive solutions cover practices such as rewards and recognitions, improving the vitality of the classroom, improving teaching and improving the rapport between students and the teacher. The writer also felt there was one basic item that must exist no matter what solution or combination of solutions was used. There must be a uniform, accurate and consistent roll and report system.

Some of the solutions recommended by the literature were not practical for the role and setting of the writer. An example would be expulsion from the class for too many absences, whatever that number might be. Since seminary classes are voluntary and before school, expulsion would be counterproductive to the mission statement of CES (see

Appendix B). Still another would be the reward of trips or tours for students that are good attenders. The LDS Church Board of Education does not allow seminary classes to go on tours or field trips.

The writer feels that there were several very workable solutions for seminary classes. In the punitive group, make up work could be assigned by the teacher so that students who were absent for any reason could make up the absence. The writer set a standard format so that make up work was uniform through his area of responsibility.

Another possible help was to have the teacher phone the home the first day a student was absent. In the past the teachers were to make that call after three absences. The writer felt that a call made by a warm, caring teacher on the day of a first absence would show both the student and the parents that the student was missed and the teacher was concerned about him or her.

The writer had not had much success with rewards and recognition in the past, but after consideration of some of the possible types of rewards listed in the literature, felt that it would be valuable to try one or two as part of the implementation.

The most important steps that could be taken to improve attendance were, in the judgement of the writer, those that improved the vitality of the classroom and the teaching that took place. Since one author reported that boring classes

and dislike of teacher were the two major reasons students did not attend, this writer addressed those areas when seeking solutions for this practicum. This was supported by the two reasons students gave for not cutting a class, the class was interesting and the teacher was good.

The writer felt that it was beyond his power to do anything about the work schedule, chores or extracurricular activities of the students. Also the type of parenting and home atmosphere was not within the authority of the writer as defined by the LDS Church Board of Education. In summary, the writer proposed a four step process that he felt offered the maximum opportunity for increasing attendance. The four steps were the improvement of teaching, establishment of a reward and recognition program, offering a standardized plan of make up work, and asking teachers to make contact with absent students on the first day of absence.

To strengthen the teaching in the seminary classes the writer worked with the teachers under his supervision in monthly faculty meetings. These meetings were held on a Friday morning during which the regular seminary classes were excused. The purpose of meeting in place of a class was to reduce the time demand on the teachers - they would normally there for class anyway and now they would have one less lesson to prepare.

Two areas of training were covered. The first was to

introduce the teachers to a new teaching skill each month. Skills that were taught were the "look for" skill, the "bridging the gap" skill and the "promoting productive discussion" skill.

The second type of inservice training was a modeling of effective ideas to enhance lessons. Each month the writer chose two lessons from the CES teaching materials that would be taught the following month. The writer prepared those lessons using the principles of readiness, involvement and application. The CES teacher training department had identified three areas of importance in each religion class. The first was labeled "learner readiness." This meant that the teacher would prepare items that would help the student to be mentally alert, focused on the task at hand and willing to actively participate in the learning process.

The second was "learner involvement." The learner would willingly and actively participate in the learning process.

The final area was that of "learner application." Here the learner would use the principles or skills taught in the instructional setting in other areas of life.

Among the professional CES teachers, these three items are referred to as RIA, using the first letter from readiness, involvement and application. These principles of teaching have been taught to the early morning volunteer teachers in the past, yet using them effectively was still a

challenge for most of these volunteers and so more instruction was indicated. The writer used the principles of RIA in modeling future lessons so that the teachers could learn by example. They were challenged to prepare all of their lessons using this format and the writer supervised their practice of the principles of RIA when he visited their classrooms.

The reward and recognition area offered more of a challenge to the writer. After looking in depth at many different types of rewards and recognitions, the writer felt that two were appropriate for the seminary classes. The first was to hold a class social at the end of each month of the implementation period. All students that were in attendance at least 90% of the classes that month were invited. The student leadership of the class, with the teacher advising, decided on the type of social activity. Financing was taken from the budget for student activities that was allotted each class. This reward was discussed with the class by the teacher at the beginning of the implementation period.

The second recognition was a certificate for all students that achieved the minimum 80% attendance each month. This certificate was signed by the teacher and the writer and send to the student's local church leader (see Appendix D). It was suggested that this certificate be presented to the students during the Sunday services.

Permission was obtained from the church leaders for this part of the proposal. It was felt that these rewards would add to the overall program. It was realized that the implementation period was too short for the full effect of such a program to take effect, however the writer felt that these rewards and recognitions would add to the overall plan.

Standardizing the make up work done by seminary students was done by the writer. Each teacher was given a written set of instructions on the subject that covered how much work could made up and what constituted enough work to make up for one absence (see Appendix E). The teachers were asked to report each month on the make up work done by their students. That report was part of the computerized roll sheet.

Each teacher was asked to inquire about every absent student within 24 hours of the absence. The teachers were instructed that this inquiry was to be directed to the student, not the parents, and it was to be a warm, caring inquiry as to the reason of the absence. The teacher's goal was to let the student know that he or she had been missed. Only when a student had been absent three times was a parent to be called. Even though calling parents is often a punitive step in the eyes of the student, the writer felt that it was an important part of our stewardship as CES teachers to communicate with parents when needed.

The final part of the writer's proposal was that a uniform and accurate record of absences be kept. To accomplish this goal the writer, with the help of an early morning teacher who is a computer programmer, developed a roll that could be computer printed each month for the teachers. This roll had columns to total absences and make up work for each student (see Appendix F). The teachers were instructed to accurately record absences and mail the completed roll to the writer's office at the end of each month of the implementation period. A new roll was sent to the teachers for each month.

The writer felt that this combination of four different approaches had the greatest opportunity for success in this role and setting. The resources were available to accomplish the outcomes and the program that was followed should be helpful on a continuing basis. The writer expected that the goals and expectations of increasing the attendance by 11% would be reached and possibly even exceeded.

Report of Action Taken

The calendar plan and outline were followed as written except for a few deviations. The biggest challenge came from the weather. The drought that had engulfed this area was reversed by heavy winter snows. In addition, numerous

days of high winds made travel difficult and at times impossible.

This necessitated a change in the implementation period. The original implementation was to take place during November, December and January. The first month went as planned and all meetings, class visits and training took place as proposed. Month two (December) turned out to be the beginning of the challenges. The faculty meeting in the northern part of the writer's area had to be cancelled when wind-blown snow caused the highway to be impassable. The snow and wind continued through December, January and February. The school districts on the north side of the Snake River lost from twelve to eighteen days of school because of closures due to impassable roads.

Seminary classes suffered more than the public schools because road crews often were not able to clear snow drifts in time for students to get to the early morning classes. The seminary classes had to be cancelled about twice as often as the public school closures. Even more frustrating was the fact that the snow caused two of the faculty meetings scheduled for December to be cancelled. All three of them had to be cancelled during January and two of them during February for the same reason. This caused the writer to change the implementation period from November, December and January to November, March and April. The months of December, January and February just could not be compared to

previous years and the high absence rate due to natural causes would have skewed the outcomes too much. The midpoint progress report did not reflect this problem because all of this was just beginning to take shape at that time, the middle of December.

The writer held the first inservice meeting at the beginning of month one. During this meeting the principle of RIA and the teaching skill "look for in the scriptures" were taught using the training video tape produced by the CES teacher inservice division. The writer also taught two sample lessons from the New Testament Teacher Manual in order to model proper teaching techniques and ideas. During the same meeting the reward and recognition program was introduced along with the written instructions for make up work.

The writer also taught the teachers how to properly keep records on the new computerized monthly rolls and the requirements for submission of those rolls on a monthly basis. Each teacher was requested to make a personal contact with every absent student within 24 hours of that absence. This was to be a warm, friendly contact to let the student know that he or she was missed and should not be to the parents. The idea was to be non-threatening to the student. Parents were not to be contacted until the student had been absent for three days.

During the rest of month one the writer was able to

visit 11 classes in session. During the first two classes visited the teachers were explaining the various components of the program to their students. The students seemed to be interested in participating and both teachers did a good job of explaining the four aspects of the program. Later in the month the writer was able to visit with two teachers who had already used the personal contact when students were absent. Both of them felt that this contact was well received by the student. They both felt that it was helpful but it was too early to tell for sure.

During the faculty meetings of month two, the instruction on teaching skills and lesson preparation continued. However since month two was now being held three months after it was originally scheduled, there was very little discussion originating from the teachers. Only one teacher had held a class social for the qualifiers in her class. The rest of them had found it too difficult to get the students together at a time other than class time.

The writer's secretary was given the assignment of typing the certificates for each student who attended 80% or more of the classes held. That turned out to be quite a massive job. It took from 16-24 hours at the end of each month to collate the names from the teacher's reports, type the certificates and mail them to the ecclesiastical leaders of each group of students.

The computer-generated attendance reports (see Appendix

G) for the ecclesiastical leaders were much easier to finish. Once the attendance was entered for each student the reports were printed out very quickly and mailed in the same mailing as the attendance certificates.

The newly designated month two went as planned with the weather cooperating now. All three faculty meetings were held as scheduled and the writer visited and observed fifteen classes in session. The log kept during those visits showed that none of the teachers had reminded their students about the reward portion of the implementation. They reported no unsolicited comments from students about receiving attendance certificates.

Month three began with the three faculty meetings being held in the different regions. The writer asked the teachers if they phoned each absent student within 24 hours. There were 31 teachers present in the month three faculty meetings and 22 of them replied that they did the phoning. Those who replied positively also said that in every case it was a good experience and worthwhile in improving the rapport with their students.

When questioned about holding socials for month two, not a single teacher had held one, nor had one planned. The second month attendance reports were mailed to church leaders along with the attendance certificates for that month. The problem with the certificates seems to be that many of the church leaders are not awarding them to the

students from their congregation. The writer sent another letter to them explaining the purpose of the certificates and requested them to please award the students their certificates.

Month three class visits were somewhat scattered due to spring breaks in the various school districts being scattered throughout the month. The writer was only able to visit nine classes that month. During this month the writer also decided to write a simple, one page questionnaire for the teachers to administer to the students (see Appendix H) A copy was made for each student originally registered and 461 (73%) were returned.

A large majority of the students (390) responded to the question about what most often describes their reason for being absent from seminary by checking the lines on illness, late extracurricular activities or late work. The writer judged these to be the more positive reasons for missing class, at least as compared to the other possible choices (see Appendix H). An even larger majority (402) of the students chose the positive reasons for wanting to attend seminary in the first place. Questions 1, 2, 3, & 5 were the positive choices. Question 5, "I want to build a solid base of religious knowledge" was the first choice of 187 students. It was interesting to note that none of the students chose question 4, "I want to attend a social and/ or get a certificate as their reason for attending.

At the conclusion of the implementation period the writer totaled the absences from the three months to get an attendance total that could be compared to the total absences from the previous year's comparison period, sent out the final absence report to church leaders along with the third month's attendance certificates.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The problem faced by the writer was one of too many absences of students. In a program where only 80% attendance is required to receive credit, 27% of the students were receiving incompletes.

The solution strategy utilized by the writer was made up of five parts, even though the proposal only listed four. These parts were strengthening teaching, a reward system, a standardized make up program, personal contact by the teacher to each student absent and a computerized roll and record keeping system.

The writer introduced a two-part program to the teachers in an effort to increase the vitality of the classroom and improve teaching. A faculty meeting was held each month in three locations within the area that was the writer's responsibility. Several locations were used in order to minimize lost time through travel. Since the meetings were held at 6:30 a.m., it enabled the teachers to be free in time for work or other responsibilities.

The first part of each faculty meeting was used by the writer to teach a classroom skill that each teacher practiced in a small group in the meeting. The second part

of the meeting consisted of the writer teaching parts of two lessons that the teachers would teach within the next 2-4 weeks. The purpose was to model correct teaching principles and to give them a head start on preparation of at least two lessons.

The reward system also had two parts. The first part was a certificate to be issued to each student that attended the required 80% minimum of classes held each month. The second part was holding a social each month for those who attended 90% or more of the classes.

Make up work was standardized with a one-page document issued to each teacher, a record was kept of all make up work completed and students were strongly encouraged to do make up work for every class missed. Parents and church leaders were also informed of the possibility of make up work and received a monthly report on how much was completed.

Teachers were asked to make some kind of personal contact with each student within 24 hours of each absence. This was to be a warm, caring, non-judgmental type of contact to express concern over the absence and to help build a rapport with the student.

The final part of the solution strategy was the computerized roll and reporting system. Under this system each teacher received a new roll each month, which also was the monthly report for the teacher. The roll had columns

for totaling the absences for each student along with the make up work accomplished. The teachers returned this roll and report to the writer by the 5th day of the following month so that the writer could enter the totals and run a monthly report for all church leaders.

The expected outcome of this practicum was an increase of 11% in the number of students receiving credit. The actual result of implementing this practicum was an increase in attendance of 3%. During the 1991-92 comparison months 67% of the students enrolled had sufficient attendance to receive credit for those months. By the end of the 1991-92 school year 73% had received full credit.

During our the 1992-93 implementation months, 70% of the students enrolled had enough attendance for credit, thus the increase of 3%. Because the implementation period had to be pushed back due to bad weather, it provided an opportunity to compare the year-end results for 1992-93 with those of 1991-92. In 1992-93 80% of the students finished the year with full credit, and increase of 7% over the previous year.

Discussion

The writer had proposed that an 11% increase in attendance would take place as a result of this practicum. Although that outcome was not reached there was an increase of 3%. Wickert (1987) reported the same increase in attendance as a result of contacts made to parents. The

writer had hoped that approaching the problem from five different paths would offer more of an increase.

Although no effort was made to measure the improvement of teaching by any formal instrument, many teachers reported that they appreciated the skills and methods that were introduced in the faculty meetings. None of them could say that they knew they became better teachers, but they did feel like they were accomplishing the task of holding the students' attention. In group discussions and in talks with the writer in private, nearly all of them felt that they were better teachers for having been exposed to new skills and concepts.

The reward and recognition portion of the practicum was listed as the least effective in increasing attendance by both the students and teachers. Not a single student responded positively to the statement that the socials or certificates were the most important reason they attended seminary. Of course the fact that only one out of a potential 105 socials was held may have affected those answers. However the teachers had all presented the possibility of the social and in many cases they had tried to hold one only to experience a tremendous lack of interest on the part of the students.

Although the writer has no records of the amount of make up work done in past years the amount done during the year of the practicum seems to be greater. The year end

figures of completion rates show this better than anything. It was estimated by the writer that at least 35 students who were below the 80% attendance level during 1991-92 completed enough make up work to raise their attendance high enough that they could receive credit. During the 1992-93 school year these results were kept right through the implemention of the practicum until the end of school. The 1991-92 results indicate that there was a 6% increase in those getting credit at the end of the year over the comparison months. The 1992-93 year end figures show that there was a 10% increase. This extra 4% can only be accounted for by increased make up work.

Every teacher reported that the requested calls were made to students when the student was absent. Some teachers said that the contact was not always within the 24 hour period that the writer had requested but that nearly always some kind of contact was made with absent students. The writer had one parent call him and say that they were grateful for the contact their son's seminary teacher had made because it caused a change in his attitude about attending seminary. He felt that his teacher cared about him at a time when no one else seemed to. Teachers felt that the personal contact was the most effective tool they used during this practicum.

The writer felt that the new roll system worked very well and was a big factor in making his job easier. The

rolls listed the classes in the same order each time and made data entry simpler than the hunt around method that had been the only way to do it when teachers made up their own roll sheets. The labeled columns on total absences and make up work also reminded the teachers to complete those figures, something that many of them did not used to do. Several of the ecclesiastical leaders told the writer that they appreciated receiving the attendance reports in a readable and timely manner also.

Recommendations

The writer would recommend that all parts of the practicum be continued except the reward and recognition portion. That part took the most time to administer and seemed to provide the least motivation to the students. French (1991) and Armstead (1980) reported that although rewards seemed to increase attendance at first, they quickly lost their effectiveness.

The writer recommends that CES adopt a system-wide roll and record keeping program that is computerized. Since all seminary principals and region coordinators have computers for administrative purposes the use of a common program would make large scale research easier in the future. The writer has offered the computer program he uses as an example for the consideration of the CES administration.

It is also recommended that a preservice and inservice training program be developed for volunteer teachers. Such

a program is already in existence for the full time, professional teachers but the volunteers vastly outnumber them and teach a large number of the CES students. These volunteer teachers, most of them not trained in teaching, would benefit from such a program and it would strengthen the students they work with.

The writer continued to encourage teachers to make personal contacts with absent students and encouraging those contacts will be a regular part of inservice with the volunteer teachers in future years. Make up work will also be encouraged, taught and improved upon because it adds to the strength of the total program. The number of students that completed make up work even when not needed for credit tells the writer that many of these students are absent for reasons beyond their control. Make up work gives them the opportunity to learn because they want to learn.

The results of this practicum have already been discussed with the writer's supervisor, Dr. H. Keith Buhler. Dr. Buhler has expressed the desire to have the writer take considerable time in future area inservice meetings to explain the various aspects of this practicum with the four other region coordinators that have the same job description as the writer. These coordinators have responsibility for seminary students in much of two states.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CES NEWS RELEASE

CES NEWS RELEASE

January 1992

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints operates an educational system that regularly serves over 460,000 high-school-age and college-age students located in all 50 states in the United States and in 99 other countries and territories throughout the world. It also provides voluntary credit or noncredit continuing education programs for an additional 389,442 individuals throughout the United States and Canada.

As a part of the LDS Church Educational System, four institutions of higher education have a combined enrollment of over 37,600 students. Included are: Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, with an enrollment of 26,863 students; Brigham Young University--Hawaii Campus in Laie, Hawaii, with 2,099 students; Ricks College in Rexburg, Idaho, with an enrollment of 7,968 students; and LDS Business College in Salt Lake City, Utah, with an enrollment of 750 students.

In addition to the four colleges and universities operated by the Church Educational System, the system has established institutes of religion adjacent to over 1,700 colleges and universities throughout the world where 136,383 individuals are receiving religious instruction.

Perhaps the greatest impact in terms of young people served by Church religious educational programs is found at the high school level in its seminary program. The seminary program provides religious instruction for over 290,000 young people. This includes released-time programs with 112,681 students; early-morning programs with 133,559 students; home-study programs with 42,482 students; and special education programs with an additional 1,582 students.

The goal of the Church Educational System is to provide all Latter-day Saint college students and high-school age students access to weekday religious education along with their secular education.

In some international areas of the world where public educational programs are not available, the Church Educational System operates elementary, middle and secondary schools. These have a combined enrollment of 9,175 students who receive both secular and religious education. Internationally, literacy instruction is also provided on an individual basis.

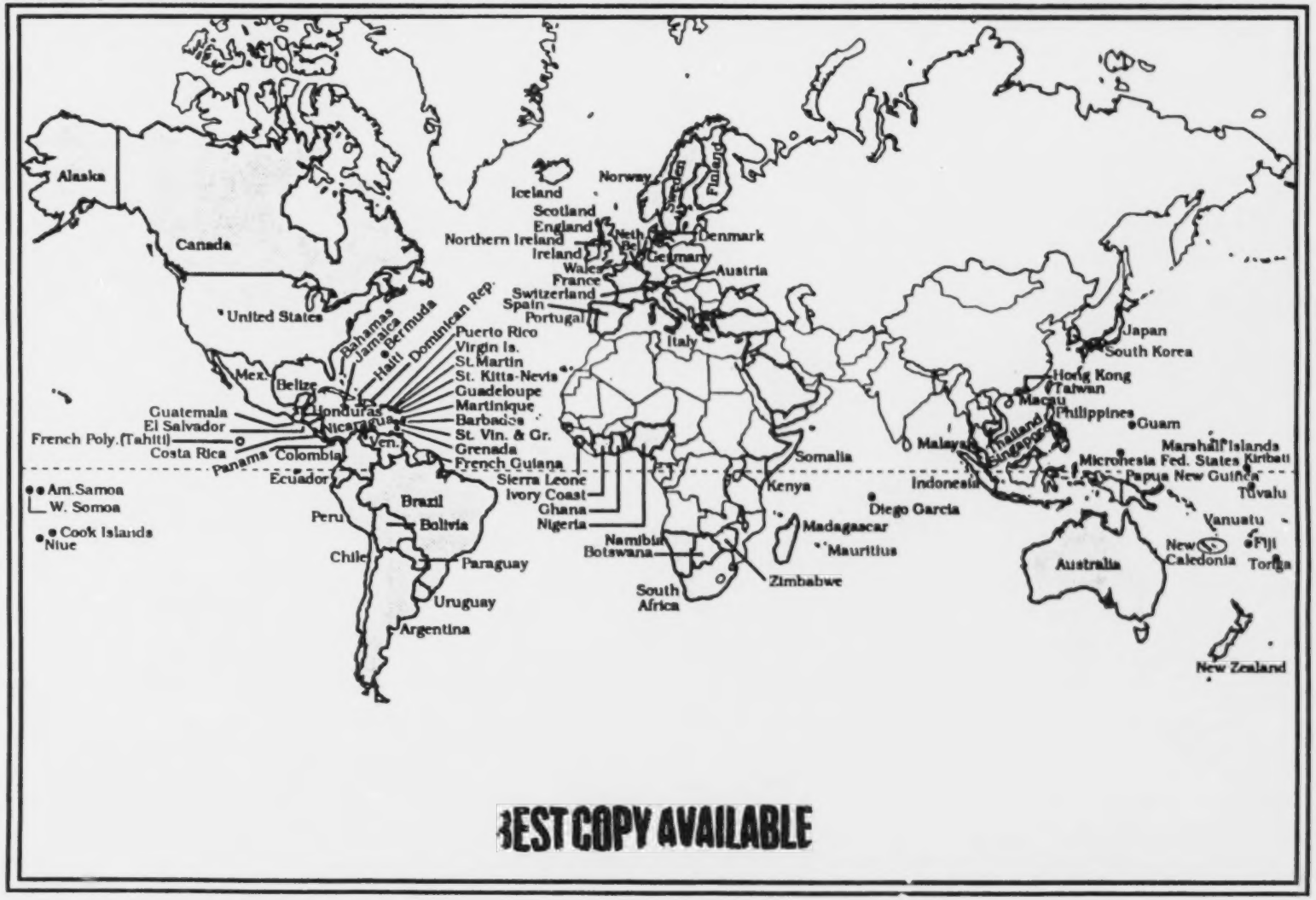
The system utilizes over 4,700 full- and part-time faculty members and over 18,000 individuals who give voluntary Church service time as teachers in the seminary and institute of religion programs.

Seminary and Institute Enrollment

Year	Seminary Enrollment	Institute Enrollment	Total Enrollment
1912-13	70	-	70
1913-14	80	-	80
1914-15	90	-	90
1915-16	337	-	337
1916-17	703	-	703
1917-18	1,030	-	1,030
1918-19	1,528	-	1,528
1919-20	3,272	-	3,272
1920-21	2,982	-	2,982
1921-22	3,040	-	3,040
1922-23	4,976	-	4,976
1923-24	6,401	-	6,401
1924-25	8,527	-	8,527
1925-26	10,376	-	10,376
1926-27	10,835	25	10,860
1927-28	11,991	57	12,048
1928-29	12,902	139	13,041
1929-30	25,993	363	26,356
1930-31	27,075	321	27,396
1931-32	29,427	509	29,936
1932-33	33,978	472	34,450
1933-34	34,337	450	34,787
1934-35	30,789	678	31,467
1935-36	28,884	957	29,841
1936-37	27,043	2,476	29,519
1937-38	30,789	2,941	33,730
1938-39	26,120	2,668	28,788
1939-40	25,629	3,084	28,713
1940-41	26,128	3,352	29,480
1941-42	27,456	3,155	30,611
1942-43	25,478	2,431	27,909
1943-44	21,428	1,285	22,713
1944-45	22,295	1,846	24,141
1945-46	22,629	2,642	25,271
1946-47	23,732	4,452	28,184
1947-48	25,060	4,235	29,295
1948-49	24,903	4,131	29,034
1949-50	26,488	4,725	31,213
1950-51	28,677	4,309	32,986
1951-52	29,812	3,862	33,674
1952-53	32,076	4,202	36,278
1953-54	34,467	4,555	39,022
1954-55	37,434	5,013	42,447
1955-56	38,285	5,558	43,843
1956-57	40,247	6,092	46,339
1957-58	44,871	7,378	52,249
1958-59	52,167	7,822	59,989
1959-60	58,855	8,353	67,208
1960-61	62,253	10,270	72,523
1961-62	72,197	13,331	85,528
1962-63	81,412	15,981	97,393
1963-64	91,236	19,205	110,441
1964-65	97,314	23,764	121,078
1965-66	103,500	30,052	133,552
1966-67	110,754	33,027	143,781
1967-68	118,567	38,751	157,318
1968-69	126,727	36,642	163,369
1969-70	132,053	44,005	176,058
1970-71	141,514	49,168	190,682
1971-72	155,082	53,395	208,477
1972-73	165,310	65,181	230,491
1973-74	172,788	68,083	240,871
1974-75	174,018	73,643	247,661
1975-76	183,670	88,678	272,348
1976-77	191,236	97,067	288,303
1977-78	192,466	108,973	301,439
1978-79	195,883	108,203	304,086
1979-80	187,906	113,789	301,695
1980-81	191,466	124,825	316,291
1981-82	191,623	121,648	313,271
1982-83	195,475	123,375	318,850
1983-84	205,616	126,762	332,378
1984-85	214,963	134,590	349,553
1985-86	225,709	122,014	347,723
1986-87	238,778	127,470	366,248
1987-88	242,435	120,669	363,104
1988-89	255,360	125,534	380,894
1989-90	274,184	129,263	403,447
1990-91	290,304	136,383	426,687

Worldwide Locations Where Seminary and Institute Programs are held– 1990-91

Seminary Enrollment: 290,304 Institute Enrollment: 136,383 Total Enrollment: 426,687 99 Countries and Territories



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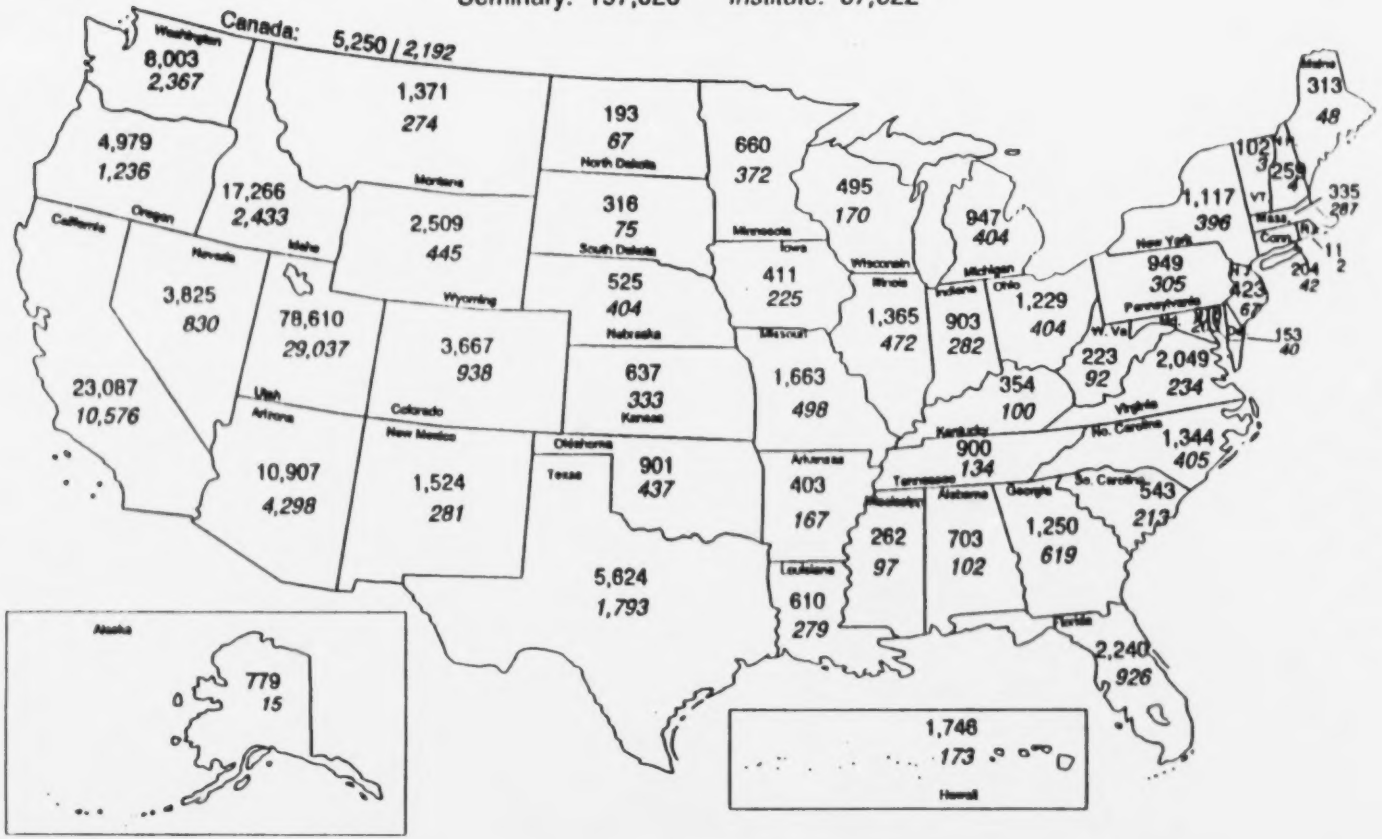
Seminary and Institute Enrollments for U.S. and Canada
1990-91 School Year

Seminary: 197,620 *Institute: 67,622*



APPENDIX B

CES MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

The mission of the Church is to assist our Father in Heaven and his Son Jesus Christ in their grand and glorious mission "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). This mission consists of—

1. *Proclaiming the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.*
2. *Perfecting the Saints by preparing them to receive the ordinances of the gospel and by instruction and discipline to gain exaltation.*
3. *Redeeming the dead by performing vicarious ordinances of the gospel for those who have lived on the earth.*

(See Ezra Taft Benson, "Feed My Sheep," Ensign, Sept. 1987, p. 3.)

The Mission of
Religious Education in the Church Educational System

The mission of religious education in the Church Educational System is to assist the individual, the family, and priesthood leaders in accomplishing the mission of the Church, particularly as it relates to perfecting the Saints. This is done in a weekday setting by—

1. *Teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ as found in:*
   - *The standard works.*
   - *The words of the living prophets.*
2. *Effectively teaching students by precept and example so they will be encouraged, assisted, and protected as they strive to:*
   - *Come unto Christ.*
   - *Receive the ordinances of the gospel.*
   - *Prepare for exaltation.*

The Commission of
Teachers and Leaders in CES Religious Education

The commission of teachers and leaders in religious education in the Church Educational System is to—

1. *Live the gospel.*
2. *Teach effectively.*
3. *Administer appropriately.*

APPENDIX C

CURRICULUM SAMPLE

LESSON 2
WILL YOU BE READY?

Objective: Teach Matthew 25; scripture mastery Matthew 25:40.

Scripture Concepts Students Should Know

1. Only through personal righteousness will we be prepared to meet the Savior.
2. The ten virgins represent members of the Church.
3. The Lord expects us to develop the physical and spiritual talents he has given us to help build his kingdom.
4. Those who serve the Lord by serving others will find favor with the Lord when he comes.

Additional Study Sources

Student manual	Unit 4, week 1, day 2
Institute manual	Chapter 22

Special Instructions

Because of the amount of material this lesson covers, you may need two days.

Ideas for Motivating Students to Study Matthew 25

You should have warned your students ahead of time that they would be given a quiz on Matthew 25:40. Distribute blank sheets of paper, and have students write out the verse as nearly perfect as they can. Tell them this quiz relates to today's lesson.

Share the following incident: "A Sunday School teacher once said to her class, 'How many of you would like to go to the celestial kingdom?' And everyone held up their hands except one little boy. The teacher said to him, 'Bill, wouldn't you like to go to the celestial kingdom someday?' And he said, 'Oh, sure, someday. But I thought you were getting up a group to go tonight.' " (Sterling W. Sill, "The Three I's," *New Era*, Aug. 1979, p. 6.)

Ask your students how many of them would deliberately choose to miss going to the celestial kingdom. Just as few deliberately failed the quiz, so will few deliberately plan to avoid going to the celestial kingdom. Ask those who passed the quiz what preparation they made. Preparation is also needed to enter the celestial kingdom.

Tell your students the lesson today covers three parables that describe how people either are or are not prepared for the Savior's second coming.

Methods for Teaching

Matthew 25:1–13. The Parable of the Ten Virgins

• Chalkboard Discussion (Student Manual)

The student manual has some helpful comments on the background of a Jewish wedding, which the Savior used as the setting for the parable of the ten virgins. The symbols from the parable could be written on the chalkboard. The students could then interpret these symbols and write their meanings on the chalkboard. The student manual lists the symbols and their meanings.

• Object Lesson

Place two small, clear, glass bottles in front of the class. Each of these bottles will represent a person's spiritual lamp. Ask students how we can spiritually put oil in our lamps. As students suggest activities we can do to bring spirituality into our lives, indicate that each of these things done daily or on a regular basis adds oil to our lamps. For each activity they suggest, put a few drops of oil or colored water in one bottle. You are demonstrating how doing these things regularly will help us have our lamps full of oil, or have the Holy Ghost with us (see D&C 45:57). When you finish, one bottle should still be empty, and the other should have a substantial amount of oil in it.

To conclude this object lesson, read the quote from President Spencer W. Kimball found in the student manual.

Matthew 25:14–30. The Parable of the Talents

• Simulation: The Investment Counselor

To help students understand the parable of the talents, use the following simulated activity.

Tell your students they are going to have the chance to be an investment counselor. Have them imagine they have been given one thousand dollars by their employer, who is going away for five months. They are to take this money and try to increase the amount. Whatever they do, they should not come back to their boss in five months with less than the one thousand dollars.

The student sheet at the end of this lesson explains student options and provides a place to record net gains or losses for each month.

A teacher copy is also included with the detailed results for each month and each of the three types of investments. The student sheet should have sufficient instructions to help you direct the students in this activity. Be sure students readjust their totals at the end of each month.

Once the simulation is concluded, have the students read Matthew 25:14–30 and match up the three servants in the scriptures with the three types of investors.

Help your students understand that each of us has been given talents and abilities. While we are here on earth the Lord expects us to develop and magnify the gifts he has given us. The student manual has some suggestions which you could use to help your students evaluate how they are currently using their own talents.

Matthew 25:31–46. The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats

• Scripture Analysis (Student Manual)

The parable found in Matthew 25:31–46 is perhaps one of the most familiar that the Savior has given. Use the scripture mastery analysis for Matthew 25:40 found in the student manual. As you explain this verse, help the students to understand that the Lord uses sheep in this chapter to represent those who serve others and thus serve him (see Mosiah 2:17). He uses goats to represent those who are more concerned with themselves and do not help or serve others.

• Student Newspaper

The newspaper *Sheep and Goats*, found at the end of this lesson, has several stories which illustrate how different people have exemplified Matthew 25:40. This paper could be duplicated and given to students. Help them see how each of the people in the stories could have been "goats" instead of "sheep" by one simple decision.

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THE INVESTMENT COUNSELOR

Teacher Copy

MONTH	A. STOCK MARKET	B. LOCK IT UP	C. BUY BULBS
1	Stocks did well this month, and your broker says you earned $80 in trading. Add $80.	You've locked it up. Good, you still have $1,000.	You received a shipment of your bulbs, but $200 worth were broken and you had no insurance. You lose $200 worth of bulbs.
2	Sorry, but with the announcement of increased gas prices, the stock market really dropped. You lost $300.	You still have your $1,000.	You tried selling your light bulbs, but the local police picked you up for soliciting without a license. You are fined $100. That was the only cash you had, but now you are licensed. No change in bulbs.
3	Gas prices fell substantially this month, so your stock has picked up. You earned $200, almost recovering your entire losses of last week.	A thief broke into your house and stole your $1,000. You now have no money.	As a licensed sales person, you have been able to really push the bulbs. You earned $300 and reduced bulb inventory $100.
4	Another good month—your stock trading gives you $340 more.	Police caught the thief, and you get your $1,000 back.	Word has spread among your new customers as well as the old ones. You have sales of $800 for $250 worth of bulbs.
5	The president announced that taxes will be reduced substantially. The stock market took a big jump. You earned $300 and cashed out.	You still have your $1,000.	A store has heard of your bulbs and wants to use them as a promotional item. They buy you out completely. Bulbs worth $350 are sold, and you receive $1,000 cash.
TOTALS	$1,620	$1,000	$2,100

This is how the completed student sheet should look for each column.

	A. STOCK MARKET	B. LOCK IT UP	C. BUY	
Starting amount	$1,000	$1,000	$900	$100
			In bulbs	Cash
Month 1	1,080	1,000	700	100
Month 2	780	1,000	700	0
Month 3	980	0	600	300
Month 4	1,320	1,000	350	1,100
Month 5	1,620	1,000	0	2,100
TOTALS	1,620	1,000	0	2,100

THE INVESTMENT COUNSELOR

	A. STOCK MARKET	B. LOCK IT UP	C. BUY	
Starting amount	$1,000	$1,000	$900	$100
			In bulbs	Cash
Month 1				
Month 2				
Month 3				
Month 4				
Month 5				
TOTALS				

Your employer is going on a five-month trip to another country. He is very wealthy and never seems to lose or waste money. Just before going he gives you a thousand dollars and says, "See what you can do to increase this, but don't lose any!"

For this example you have only three possible choices. Once you have started you cannot change to another column. If you choose column A, you will have to risk the rise and fall of the stock market. You could lose all or part of your investment. If you choose column B, you will be sure to have the $1,000 in five months. If you choose column C, you will have bought light bulbs at a wholesale price of $900, and you will need to sell them. Make your decision and see what happens.

Keep a running total of the amount of money you have at the end of each month. This will be determined by adding or subtracting the amounts indicated by the situations your teacher will read for each month.

SHEEP AND GOATS

Published by Seminary Press International

Now While There's Time

SPI—Ed Bartley, an English professor, was working frantically to prepare a test on Melville for his English students the next day. His two-year-old daughter Meghan, who calls birds "bib-bibs" and her doll "Dumpty" came up to him with a pile of storybooks and a pleading look. Ed records this account as follows:

"*The Poky Little Puppy, The Magic Bus, The Cat in the Hat,* even that ancient copy of *National Geographic* with the penguin on the cover . . . she's got them all.

"With her free hand, she tugs at my sleeve.

" 'No Meghan,' I snap irritably, 'Not now. Go away and leave me alone. And take your library with you.'

"That does it; she leaves. She makes no further attempt to bother me. I can finish the test easily now without interference. No one trying to climb onto my lap; no extra fingers helping me type.

"I see her standing quietly with her back against the sofa, tears running down her cheeks. She has two fingers of her right hand in her mouth. She holds the tragic Dumpty in her left. She watches me type, and slowly brushes the tip of Dumpty's anemic arm across her nose to comfort her.

"At this moment, only for a moment, I see things as God must—in perspective, with all the pieces fitting. I see a little girl cry because *I* haven't time for her. Imagine ever being that important to another human being! I see the day when it won't mean so much to a tiny soul to have me sit next to her and read a story, one that means little to either of us, realizing somehow that it is the sitting next to each other that means everything. . . .

" . . . She and I have few enough days like this to share. So the paper slips gently into the top drawer, the hood slides over the typewriter. The test will get done somehow. Tests always get done.

" 'Meghan, I feel like taking a walk down to the park. I was wondering if you . . . would care to join me. I thought maybe you'd like to go on the swings for a while. Bring Dumpty—and your red sweater too. It might be windy down there.'

"At the word 'park' the fingers leave the mouth. She laughs excitedly and begins a frantic search for her shoes and socks.

"Melville will have to wait. . . .

" . . . I must go right now—while bib-bibs still spark wonder, and before dandelions become weeds, and while a little girl thinks that a leaf from her father is a gift beyond measure." (In "Now . . . While There's Time," *Reader's Digest,* Dec. 1969, pp. 103–4.)

Have you ever ignored a little brother or sister and refused to help them?

___ Sheep ___ Goats

Award Given

SPI—A group of young men, all members of the local football team, decided to give an award to the girl they considered to be the ugliest girl in the school. The girl's name was Mary. The award was to consist of a corsage and the following poem:

"When we speak of ugly, you're the subject of talk.
You've got a face that could stop a clock.
Accept this gift for what it's worth;
We think you're the ugliest girl on earth."

They all broke into laughter when they heard the poem read. Kevin, the only LDS boy on the team, was chosen to tape the corsage and poem to Mary's locker.

Before the award was to be delivered, Kevin found out several things about Mary. First, she spent two hours each day as a volunteer worker with handicapped children. She was also investigating the Church with Colleen, a close friend of Kevin's. He also found out that she had a kidney malfunction which would possibly shorten her life substantially.

Through much thought and the encouragement of Colleen, Kevin decided he would risk his friendship with the football players and change the note that would accompany the corsage. The new note read:

"A group of athletes want you to know that we think you're a special person. Thanks for giving of yourself to work with handicapped children. You set a good example for all of us. We have chosen you the winner of our Extra-Mile Award."

This award had a significant effect on Mary and her feelings of self-worth.

When the football players found out, some were upset and rejected Kevin, but several others, after learning what Mary was really like and seeing the good the award had done, decided the award should be given each month to a deserving student who otherwise might not be recognized. (Adapted from Jack Weyland, "The Award," *New Era,* Nov. 1979, pp. 33–37.)

___ Sheep ___ Goats

A Sacrifice Miracle

SPI—"On a cold winter's night in 1951 there was a knock at my door, and a German brother from Ogden, Utah, announced himself and said, 'Are you Bishop Monson?' I answered in the affirmative. He began to weep and said, 'My brother and his wife and family are coming here from Germany. They are going to live in your ward. Will you come with us to see the apartment we have rented for them?' On the way to the apartment, he told me he had not

[illegible] through the holocaust of World War II, his brother had been faithful to the Church, serving as a branch president before the war took him to the Russian front.

"I looked at the apartment. It was cold and dreary. The paint was peeling, the wallpaper soiled, the cupboards empty. A forty-watt bulb hanging from the living room ceiling revealed a linoleum floor covering with a large hole in the center. I was heartsick. I thought, 'What a dismal welcome for a family which has endured so much.'

"My thoughts were interrupted by the brother's statement, 'It isn't much, but it's better than they have in Germany.' With that, the key was left with me, along with the information that the family would arrive in Salt Lake City in three weeks—just two days before Christmas.

"Sleep was slow in coming to me that night. The next morning was Sunday. In our ward welfare committee meeting, one of my counselors said, 'Bishop, you look worried. Is something wrong?' I recounted to those present my experience of the night before, the details of the uninviting apartment. There were a few moments of silence. Then the group leader of the high priests said, 'Bishop, did you say that apartment was inadequately lighted and that the kitchen appliances were in need of replacement?' I answered in the affirmative. He continued, 'I am an electrical contractor. Would you permit the high priests of this ward to rewire that apartment? I would also like to invite my suppliers to contribute a new stove and a new refrigerator. Do I have your permission?' I answered with a glad 'Certainly.'

"Then the seventies president responded: 'Bishop, as you know I'm in the carpet business. I would like to invite my suppliers to contribute some carpet, and the seventies can easily lay it and eliminate that worn linoleum.'

"Then the president of the elders quorum spoke up. He was a painting contractor. He said, 'I'll furnish the paint. May the elders paint and wallpaper that apartment?'

"The Relief Society president was next to speak: 'We in the Relief Society cannot stand the thought of empty cupboards. May we fill them?'

"The next three weeks are ever to be remembered. It seemed that the entire ward joined in the project. The days passed, and at the appointed time the family arrived from Germany. Again at my door stood the brother from Ogden. With an emotion-filled voice, he introduced me to his brother, wife, and their family. Then he asked, 'Could we go visit the apartment?' As we walked up the staircase to the apartment, he repeated, 'It isn't much, but it's more than they have had in Germany.' Little did he know what a transformation had taken place, that many who participated were inside waiting for our arrival.

"The door opened to reveal a literal newness of life. We were greeted by the aroma of freshly painted woodwork and newly papered walls. Gone was the forty-watt bulb, along with the worn linoleum it had illuminated. We stepped on carpet deep and beautiful. A walk to the kitchen presented to our view a new stove and refrigerator. The cupboard doors were still open; however, they now revealed that every shelf was filled with food. The Relief Society as usual had done its work.

[illegible] began to sing Christmas hymns. We sang 'Silent night, Holy night! All is calm, all is bright.' (Hymns, no. 160.) We sang in English; they sang in German. At the conclusion, the father, realizing that all of this was his, took me by the hand to express his thanks. His emotion was too great. He buried his head in my shoulder and repeated the words, 'Mein Bruder, mein Bruder, mein Bruder.'

"As we walked down the stairs and out into the night air, it was snowing. Not a word was spoken. Then a young girl asked, 'Bishop, I feel better inside than I have ever felt before. Can you tell me why?'

"I responded with the words of the Master: 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.' (Matt. 25:40)." (Thomas S. Monson, in Conference Report, Oct. 1980, pp. 133–34; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, p. 91.)

___ Sheep ___ Goats

From English to Braille

SPI—"A Young Women teacher had a blind girl in her class whose participation was limited because she could not study in the usual way. The teacher would go to the girl's home and read out loud while the girl translated her personal progress book into braille. The work took two years. The teacher also encouraged the other girls in the class to help. Under her direction, they went to the blind girl's home and read to her from the manual until it was translated into braille." (M. Russell Ballard, in Conference Report, Oct. 1980, p. 31; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, p. 23.)

___ Sheep ___ Goats

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Saints Miss Conference

SPI—An area conference was held in the Dominican Republic. Nearly sixteen hundred people attended. Due to a bus breakdown, however, one hundred Saints arrived at 10 P.M. in the evening, one hour after the conference was over. Many of them wept because of their disappointment. President Spencer W. Kimball gives the following account:

"Sister Kimball and I had gone to bed after a long and tiring day. Upon learning of the plight of these faithful souls, my secretary knocked on the door of our hotel room and woke us up. He apologized for disturbing us but thought that I would want to know about the late arrivals and perhaps dictate a personal message to them. However, I felt that wouldn't be good enough and not fair to those who had come so far under such trying circumstances—one hundred people jammed into one bus. I got out of bed and dressed and went downstairs to see the members who had made such an effort only to be disappointed because of engine trouble. The Saints were still weeping as we entered the hall, so I spent more than an hour visiting with them.

"They then seemed relieved and satisfied and got back on the bus for the long ride home. They had to get back by morning to go to work and to school. Those good people seemed so appreciative of a brief visit together that I felt we just couldn't let them down. As I returned to my bed, I did so with a sense of peace and contentment in my soul." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1981, pp. 62–63; or *Ensign*, May 1981, pp. 45–46.)

___ Sheep ___ Goats

APPENDIX D

CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT

The Church Of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Seminary Achievement Award

Presented to.....

For Outstanding Achievement In

.....

Awarded by the L.D.S. Seminary

.....

Date of Award

Approved

APPENDIX E

MAKE UP GUIDELINES

TWIN FALLS - JEROME REGIONS
Make-up & Home Study

The Church Education System Policy Handbook only gives the following quote concerning make-up work to complete a seminary course of study. "....the make-up work should be meaningful & realistic according to what has been missed."

That leaves it pretty much up to the individual teacher to decide exactly what is given as make-up work. We have generally described "meaningful & realistic" as being one lesson in the student manual for each day missed. However when large numbers of days are missed that no longer seems to fit because of many other important parts of the seminary course that are not included. These would include reading the book of scripture for the course, learning the basic 25 scripture mastery scriptures, and participating in the special audio-visual presentations & discussions that are extremely important in the application of principles.

Therefore I would like to propose the following policy concerning make up work for the Twin Falls Jerome Regions:

Average days seminary is held.....160
80% attendance required for credit.....-32 = 128 days
Make-up from student manual (additional 30%).....-48 = 80 days

ANYTHING OVER 80 DAYS MISSED (50%) WILL NEED TO BE MADE UP BY HOME STUDY. This means that the student's Bishop will need to call a home study teacher to help them complete the course. A home study teacher meets with a student once a week for 50 minutes and teachs a lesson from the "Home Study Teacher Manual" and reviews the home study lessons the student has completed during the week. Under most conditions this home study teacher should <u>not</u> be the early-morning teacher. It can be a parent if the Bishop is sure the parent can follow through and is in a position to work with their own child. A monthly report must come in to the CES office in Twin Falls, the same as with any regular Home Study class. Cost of the "Home Study Teacher Manual" is $3.00. I do not have the budget allowance for that, although my office has been paying that cost up to this point it will be impossible if any more than 10 are requested in the two regions.

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE CLASS ROLL

Date: 10/01/92

TWIN FALLS / JEROME

Recording Codes:
Absent (-) Tardy (T)

Class Rosters for October 1992

Class: 25 Instructor: NANCY WEEKS

Student Name	Stk Ward Yr	New Enroll LDS	New Enroll Non	Disc	Week 1 M	Week 1 T	Week 1 W	Week 1 T	Week 1 F	Week 2 M	Week 2 T	Week 2 W	Week 2 T	Week 2 F	Week 3 M	Week 3 T	Week 3 W	Week 3 T	Week 3 F	Week 4 M	Week 4 T	Week 4 W	Week 4 T	Week 4 F	Week 5 M	Week 5 T	Week 5 W	Week 5 T	Week 5 F	Total Absences	Makeup	Tardies				
JASON BINGHAM	WEN G-1 12																																	
KADIE CHENEY	WEN G-1 12																																	
JUSTIN CLEVERLY	WEN G-1 12																																	
GILBERT DEWEY	WEN G-1 12																																	
RAYMOND GOODMAN	WEN G-1 12																																	
AMY MERAE	WEN G-1 12																																	
NATHAN PRICE	WEN G-1 12																																	
BRENT ROGERS	WEN G-1 12																																	
RYAN STEEL	WEN G-1 12																																	
LAVONA ANDREW	WEN G-2 12																																	
MICHAEL BRADSHAW	WEN G-2 12																																	
KAARYN CHILD	WEN G-2 12																																	
ALESHA QUIGLEY	WEN G-2 12																																	
ADELE RICKS	WEN G-2 12																																	

Total Enrolled as of the last of the month _____ Number of classes held during the month _____

APPENDIX G

SAMPLE MONTHLY REPORT

Date: 00/00/00 Twin Falls / Jerome Region CES

Monthly Absences Report

Stake: CAR Ward: C-1

Student Name	Instructor	Monthly Absences										Makeup Total	Total Absences
		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Total		
GINGER BARTON	TRACY GREEN	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	2	0	6	1	5
JADE BARTON	TRACY GREEN	0	1	1	1	2	1	0	1	0	7	4	3
ANGEL BROADIE	TRACY GREEN	1	1	2	3	2	0	2	3	0	14	4	10
APRIL BROADIE	TRACY GREEN	0	0	2	2	0	0	1	1	0	6		6
RHONDA CONRAD	ANN TAYLOR	5	8	4	2	5	7	5	3	0	39	20	19
BRANDON HENNEFER	TRACY GREEN	4	4	2	1	3	1	0	2	0	17	2	15
KRISTIE JURGENSMEIER	ANN TAYLOR	3	3	4	3	2	2	5	7	0	29	4	25
WENDY JURGENSMEIER	TRACY GREEN	1	2	1	4	3	4	5	3	0	23	4	19
LYMAN KIRKLAND	ANN TAYLOR	1	0	0	1	1	0	3	4	0	10	5	5
BEN MECHAM	ANN TAYLOR	0	0	1	1	0	1	2	2	0	7	1	6
BRADLEY MECHAM	TRACY GREEN	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	6	4	2
DERRICK PARKE	TRACY GREEN	2	3	2	2	4	3	4	3	0	23	1	22
ARRIEL PATTERSON	TRACY GREEN	1	0	0	0	2	1	10	3	0	17	1	16
ASHLEE PECK	TRACY GREEN	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	2	0	6	2	4
JARED PECK	ANN TAYLOR	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	2	0	6	6	
JOEL PECK	TRACY GREEN	0	1	0	0	1	0	3	1	0	6	3	3
TIFFANY PECK	ANN TAYLOR	0	3	0	1	2	3	5	2	0	16	4	12
MARK PYRAH	TRACY GREEN	0	0	3	2	1	3	1	2	0	12		12
STEVEN PYRAH	ANN TAYLOR	0	1	2	2	0	1	1	2	0	9		9
JEREMY ROYAL	TRACY GREEN	2	1	3	0	0	0	1	2	0	9	1	8
BECKY SIMMONS	TRACY GREEN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	
TOBY SIMMONS	ANN TAYLOR	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	1
DAVID SIMPSON	TRACY GREEN	0	2	0	3	1	0	0	1	0	7	3	4
DUSTY SIMPSON	ANN TAYLOR	0	1	1	1	2	1	0	1	0	7	1	6
KRISTY SIMPSON	TRACY GREEN	0	3	2	2	3	2	2	1	0	15	1	14

APPENDIX H

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please check the one answer that most often describes your reason for being absent from seminary.

___ I am bored with the class.

___ My parents do not get me up.

___ I have no transportation.

___ I don't enjoy learning about religious things.

___ I work so late at night that I'm too tired.

___ I have to do chores in the morning.

___ My extracurricular activities keep me out too late.

___ I am absent due to illness.

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Please check one answer that most often describes why you want to attend seminary.

___ I find the lessons interesting.

___ It is a chance to be with my friends.

___ I know my teacher cares about me.

___ I want to attend a social and/or get a certificate.

___ It will help me get into Brigham Young University.

___ I want to build a solid base of religious knowledge.